

Al Qaeda's Latest

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Al Qaeda apparently struck again yesterday, this time with a pair of truck bombs outside United Nations offices in Algiers. The dead -- at first count 26 but perhaps dozens more -- included numerous U.N. workers. The attack was the worst on that body since the 2003 truck bombing on U.N. headquarters in Baghdad that killed 22.

The workers in Algeria had nothing to do with the Iraq war, but were merely part of the U.N.'s larger operations in North Africa, including the U.N. Development Program, which provides foreign aid. The attack is another reminder that Americans and their allies aren't the only, or even the main, targets of Islamic terrorists. The North African branch of al Qaeda claimed it was responsible for the attack, and the suicide bombers also hit Algeria's Constitutional Council in a different neighborhood.

The attacks are also a sign that al Qaeda continues to search for "soft" targets that are less well protected than those in Western capitals. Algeria has been a prominent target in recent months, and North Africa in general seems to be a region where al Qaeda feels it has enough recruits and ample opportunity to strike. The fact that these are Muslim governments doesn't matter, as the Islamists gladly kill innocent Muslims to make their larger political point.

Americans have been fortunate not to have been struck on their homeland since 9/11, even as so many other nations have. If our furious domestic debates over "torture" and terrorist wiretapping are an indication, many Americans seem to assume that this kind of immunity will continue and has nothing to do with U.S. antiterror policies since September 11. Algiers is a reminder of the dangers in making such assumptions.